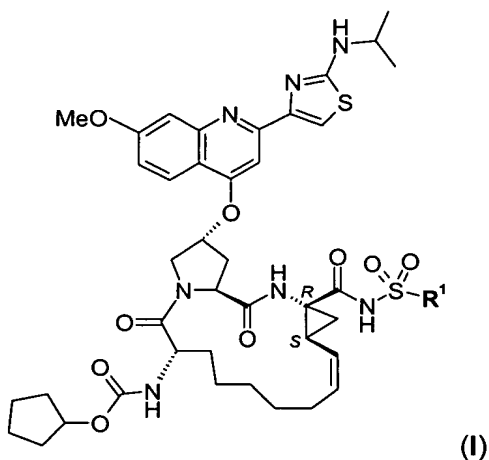


# CLAIMS

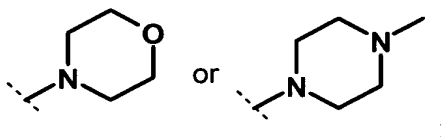
## WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A compound of formula (I)

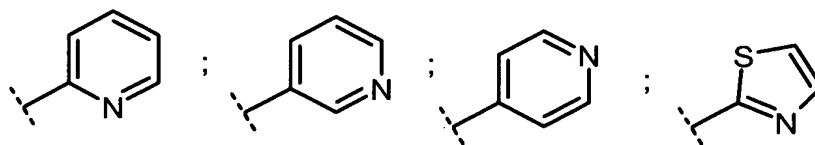


wherein **R<sup>1</sup>** is (C<sub>1-8</sub>)alkyl, (C<sub>3-7</sub>)cycloalkyl, {(C<sub>1-6</sub>)alkyl-(C<sub>3-7</sub>)cycloalkyl} or Het, which are all optionally substituted from 1 to 3 times with halo, cyano, nitro, O-(C<sub>1-6</sub>)alkyl, amido, amino or phenyl; or **R<sup>1</sup>** is C<sub>6</sub> or C<sub>10</sub> aryl which is optionally substituted from 1 to 3 times with halo, cyano, nitro, (C<sub>1-6</sub>)alkyl, O-(C<sub>1-6</sub>)alkyl, amido, amino or phenyl; or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

2. A compound according to claim 1, wherein said Het is:



or a heteroaryl selected from:



said heteroaryl being optionally substituted with C<sub>1-6</sub> alkyl.

3. A compound according to claim 1, wherein **R<sup>1</sup>** is (C<sub>1-8</sub>)alkyl, (C<sub>3-7</sub>)cycloalkyl or {(C<sub>1-6</sub>)alkyl-(C<sub>3-7</sub>)cycloalkyl}, which are all optionally substituted from 1 to 3 times with

halo, cyano, nitro, O-(C<sub>1-6</sub>)alkyl, amido, amino or phenyl; or R<sup>1</sup> is C<sub>6</sub> or C<sub>10</sub> aryl which is optionally substituted from 1 to 3 times with halo, cyano, nitro, (C<sub>1-6</sub>)alkyl, O-(C<sub>1-6</sub>)alkyl, amido, amino or phenyl; or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

4. A compound according to claim 3, wherein R<sup>1</sup> is (C<sub>1-6</sub>)alkyl, (C<sub>3-6</sub>)cycloalkyl or {(C<sub>1-6</sub>)alkyl-(C<sub>3-6</sub>)cycloalkyl}, which are all optionally substituted from 1 to 3 times with halo, nitro or O-(C<sub>1-6</sub>)alkyl, or phenyl which is optionally substituted from 1 to 3 times with halo, nitro, (C<sub>1-6</sub>)alkyl or O-(C<sub>1-6</sub>)alkyl.
5. A compound according to claim 4, wherein R<sup>1</sup> is methyl, ethyl, *n*-propyl, *i*-propyl, cyclopropyl, cyclobutyl, cyclopentyl, cyclopropylmethyl, cyclohexylethyl, CCl<sub>3</sub>, CF<sub>3</sub>, phenyl, 2-fluorophenyl, or 4-methylphenyl.
6. A compound according to claim 5 wherein R<sup>1</sup> is methyl, cyclopropyl, CF<sub>3</sub> or phenyl.
7. A compound according to claim 6 wherein R<sup>1</sup> is methyl.
8. A compound according to claim 6 wherein R<sup>1</sup> is cyclopropyl.
9. A compound according to claim 6 wherein R<sup>1</sup> is phenyl.
10. A pharmaceutical composition comprising an anti-hepatitis C virally effective amount of a compound of formula I according to claim 1, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, in admixture with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier medium or auxiliary agent.
11. A pharmaceutical composition according to claim 10, further comprising a therapeutically effective amount  $\alpha$ -interferon
12. A pharmaceutical composition according to claim 10, further comprising a therapeutically effective amount of pegylated  $\alpha$ -interferon.
13. A pharmaceutical composition according to claim 10, further comprising a therapeutically effective amount of ribavirin.

14. A pharmaceutical composition according to claim 11, further comprising a therapeutically effective amount of ribavirin.
15. A pharmaceutical composition according to claim 12, further comprising a therapeutically effective amount of ribavirin.
16. A method of treating a hepatitis C viral infection in a mammal comprising administering to the mammal an anti-hepatitis C virally effective amount of a compound of formula I according to claim 1, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.
17. A method of treating a hepatitis C viral infection in a mammal comprising administering to the mammal an anti-hepatitis C virally effective amount of the composition according to claim 10.
18. A method of treating a hepatitis C viral infection in a mammal comprising administering to the mammal an anti-hepatitis C virally effective amount of the composition according to claim 11.
19. A method of treating a hepatitis C viral infection in a mammal comprising administering to the mammal an anti-hepatitis C virally effective amount of the composition according to claim 12.
20. A method of treating a hepatitis C viral infection in a mammal comprising administering to the mammal an anti-hepatitis C virally effective amount of the composition according to claim 13.
21. A method of inhibiting the replication of hepatitis C virus comprising exposing the virus to a hepatitis C viral NS3 protease inhibiting amount of a compound of formula I according to claim 1, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.
22. A method of treating a hepatitis C viral infection in a mammal comprising administering to the mammal an anti-hepatitis C virally effective amount of a

pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound of formula I according to claim 1, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, and one or more other anti-HCV agents.

23. A method according to claim 22, wherein said other anti-HCV agent is selected from the group consisting of:  $\alpha$ -,  $\beta$ -  $\delta$ -,  $\gamma$ -,  $\omega$ -interferon, pegylated  $\alpha$ -,  $\beta$ -,  $\delta$ -,  $\gamma$ -,  $\omega$ -interferon, ribavirin and amantadine.
24. A method according to claim 23, wherein said other anti-HCV agent is  $\alpha$ -interferon.
25. A method according to claim 23, wherein said other anti-HCV agent is pegylated  $\alpha$ -interferon.
26. A method according to claim 24, wherein the composition further comprises ribavirin.
27. A method according to claim 25, wherein the composition further comprises ribavirin.
28. A method of treating a hepatitis C viral infection in a mammal comprising administering to the mammal an anti-hepatitis C virally effective amount of a combination of a compound of formula I according to claim 1, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, and one or more other anti-HCV agents, wherein said one or more other anti-HCV agents are administered to the mammal prior to, concurrently with, or following the administration of the compound of formula I.